



Meeting Summary & Outline of Unified Strategy

I. Summary

On November 7, 2017, Governor Jim Justice convened senior-level state and federal officials to create a unified strategy regarding disaster recovery funds from the floods of 2016. The discussion was the first in a series of senior level meetings to look at strategically aligning those funds. The meeting was an important step in the creation of the strategy and empowered appointed action officers to create a strategy to align and leverage the disaster funding.

The action officers were tasked to further explore options and bring recommendations to the senior officials for approval. They will meet on a more regular basis to draft a unified strategy for 2016 funds and delve into the roles and responsibilities of state departments and divisions. This role will also support the establishment of the West Virginia State Resiliency Office (SRO). All efforts combined will ensure that West Virginia becomes more resilient and continues to take a unified and strategic approach to disaster recovery.

The facilitated discussion addressed five major topics:

- 1. Ranked Priorities**
- 2. Guiding Principles**
- 3. Reprioritization of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) Applications**
- 4. Reallocation of Community Development Block Grant –Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) Funds**
- 5. Role of Action Officers**

Sections II through VI of this document provide more detail on each major topic and what was agreed to during the Session. These sections can serve as the basis for a unified strategy regarding 2016 flood funding. The final section (VII) proposes next steps for the senior leadership group and the action officers.

Also included are two appendices: a list of Session attendees and detailed notes from the proceedings.

II. Ranked Priorities

Much of the morning session focused on the need to identify priorities for the State's disaster recovery funds from the June 2016 floods. The disaster marked the first time that West Virginia received a CDBG-DR allocation and it was the largest amount of HMGP funds ever received. Due to the complexity of the situation, the meeting was convened to ensure that there was a holistic strategy for the use of these recovery funds. The facilitator proposed overarching priority areas based upon the functional areas where funds were already earmarked. This led to a lengthy and detailed discussion regarding priorities. The resulting ranked priority areas were identified, ranked and confirmed:

1. Infrastructure
2. Economic Development
3. Housing

III. Guiding Principles

While determining priorities, participants discussed overarching ideas or principles that should influence all decision making in the state. The prevalent theme in the discussion was ensuring that funding decisions and recovery efforts should decrease risk over time and make communities more resilient. It was decided that the group would use guiding principles to serve as "decision points" when looking at the merit of state funded projects, with three guiding principles identified:

1. Resiliency
2. Mitigation
3. Job Creation

IV. Reprioritization of HMGP Applications

With the influx of disaster recovery funds, recovery programs have the potential to duplicate efforts and even convolute the recovery process. Concerns were raised that both CDBG-DR and HMGP were allocating more funding towards housing recovery than the existing unmet need. There was also discussion about needs in the other function areas. The West Virginia Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (WV DHSEM) and the West Virginia Department of Commerce (WV DOC) began meetings to discuss in part how to best coordinate the two programs. As a result of these meetings and the Session, the WV DHSEM is now looking at the reprioritization of grant applications and ways to streamline the HMGP/CDBG-DR funding match, with agreement on the following: